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April 13, 2004

**MADIGAN, ISORT, LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
ANNOUNCE ARREST OF AND CHARGES AGAINST
UNREGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS DURING RAID,
OUTLINE CRITICAL CHANGES TO REGISTRY**

Rockford - Speaking at a morning news conference, Attorney General Lisa Madigan, members of the Illinois Sex Offender Registry Team (ISORT) and local law enforcement and officials today announced an early morning raid to locate, arrest and charge unregistered sex offenders in the Rockford area.

In the first two hours of the operation, ISORT members and local law enforcement located 14 unregistered sex offenders. Of the 14 sex offenders located, 10 were arrested and charged with a Class 4 Felony, carrying up to three years in prison. Four were identified as being incarcerated elsewhere. Twelve of the 14 offenders are child molesters. Winnebago County has the third highest number of unregistered sex offenders in any Illinois county.

Participating in today's raid - dubbed "OPERATION TIME'S UP" - were Madigan's office, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), the Illinois State Police (ISP), the U.S. Marshal's Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force and the offices of Winnebago County State's Attorney Paul Logli, Winnebago County Sheriff Richard Meyers and Rockford Police Department Chief Steven Pugh. The office of Rockford Mayor Doug Scott also participated in the planning.

Today's roundup is the second enforcement action undertaken by ISORT, a team Madigan created in December to focus on fixing flaws in and improving the state's sex offender registry. With participation by local, state and federal law enforcement during a February 10 raid in Chicago, ISORT members were able to identify, arrest and charge sex offenders who either failed to register annually or failed to register after release from prison.

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“We are here together today because all of us share a top priority: protecting women and children from sexual predators,” Madigan said. “Whether arming citizens with accurate information or arming law enforcement with arrest warrants, we will work to prevent crimes before they happen and if they do happen, we will hold the offenders accountable.”

Madigan and ISORT members also announced improvements to the ISP’s sex offender registry and to IDOC’s Web site to provide Illinoisans with additional and more accurate information about sex offenders.

Improvements to the ISP registry include the addition of a sex offender’s compliance status and criminal history, as well as the correction of flaws, misidentifications and wrong addresses. Last month, Madigan and the ISP announced three new changes that will increase access to the site, clearly identify the most dangerous of convicted sex offenders and provide links to all Web-based sex offender registries in other states.

Two of those changes include the translation of directions in Spanish on how to navigate the site and a new label that clearly identifies “sexual predators,” those sex offenders who are judged to be the most dangerous to the community.

The IDOC Web site has been improved to alert the public and law enforcement agencies as to whether offenders are required to register upon their release. IDOC also will notify local law enforcement by letter when a convicted sex offender is released and headed to a specific community.

The changes are the most extensive improvements made to the ISP sex offender registry in nearly two decades. Madigan said the additional information could help prevent repeats of horror stories she and lawmakers were told at hearings this fall by victims’ families and advocates.

“The sex offender registry is only effective if the information included on its pages is accurate and up to date. When I held hearings around the state this fall, we heard numerous stories that demonstrate how important this registry is,” Madigan said. “For example, we heard about a mother who checked the Web site before dating a man. The man’s name did not appear on the site because he failed to register. Her nine-year-old son was molested repeatedly by that man. In direct response to stories like that, we have made critical improvements to help keep sex offenders from dropping off the radar. We have much more to do, but we are taking first important steps.”

“The noncompliant sex offender detail in Winnebago County is another fine example of how public safety agencies in the Illinois Sex Offender Registry Team (ISORT) are actively engaged in protecting the citizens of Illinois,” said ISP Director Larry Trent. “The Illinois State Police will continue to make the enforcement of sex offender statutes in our state a priority.” Trent was not able to attend the news conference.

ISORT members include Madigan’s office, the ISP, the IDOC, the Chicago Police Department, the U.S. Marshall, the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Illinois Chiefs of Police and the Illinois Sheriffs’ Association.